



County Administrative Office
Governmental & Legislative Affairs

Josh Candelaria
Director

March 10, 2020

The Honorable Richard Pan
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: \$20 Million for Local Health Department STD Navigation Services – **SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Pan:

The County of San Bernardino respectfully requests your support of a continuous appropriation of \$20 million General Fund beginning in FY 2020-21 for intensive sexually transmitted disease (STD) navigation services for individuals who are experiencing reinfections, who are infected with multiple STDs at the same time, or who are diagnosed with HIV and STDs with the ultimate goal of decreasing the STD infection rate in California.

California has recently seen record increases in STDs in all regions of the state and among both women and men. In 2018, the number of reported STD cases in California was 25,344 for syphilis (all stages), representing a 265 percent increase over cases 10 years ago. STDs pose a major public health threat to the health and wellbeing of our communities. Specifically, in San Bernardino County chlamydia and gonorrhea rates have steadily increased for the past five years. Syphilis has more than tripled in the same amount of time and congenital syphilis has increased more than sevenfold. While these conditions are curable, they often do not show symptoms and go undetected, which can lead to serious health complications, including infertility.

The County of San Bernardino works diligently to prevent and reduce STD transmission within our jurisdiction, particularly among vulnerable populations. Local health departments in California, including ours, are mandated to investigate and prevent all infectious venereal diseases, including syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia, a responsibility for which no other entity is accountable. However, local health departments in California remain underfunded, and no specific funding source exists to address individuals experiencing reinfection of these conditions. Furthermore, state and federal funding for communicable disease control activities, including for STDs, have considerably declined over time and are primarily siloed based on the disease condition.

This investment would allow our local health department to target individuals experiencing reinfections or multiple infections of syphilis, chlamydia, or gonorrhea with high-touch and intensive navigation services with the ultimate goal of decreasing the STD infection rate.

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For the reasons listed above, the County respectfully urges your support of this continuous appropriation of \$20 million General Fund to provide local health department STD navigation services. Should you have any questions regarding the County's position, please feel free to contact Josh Candelaria, Director of Governmental and Legislative Affairs, at jcandelaria@sbcountry.gov or 909 387-4821.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Curt Hagman", with a stylized, flowing script.

Curt Hagman
Fourth District Supervisor
Chair, San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors

cc: Honorable Members, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 3
Honorable Freddie Rodriguez
San Bernardino County Legislative Delegation